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FY 2008 Proposal to Boost Funding for U.S. Department of Labor's MSHA by 13 Percent Over Current Funding Level to \$313.5 Million

ARLINGTON, Va. – Richard E. Stickler, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health, today announced that the proposed fiscal year 2008 budget for the U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) would increase the agency's budget by more than 13 percent above current funding levels under a continuing budget resolution.

The budget proposal also would provide the agency with 2,306 full-time employees and would continue funding for 170 additional coal mine enforcement personnel hired during FY 2007.

"This budget proposal demonstrates a strong commitment to mine safety and would provide MSHA with vital resources it needs to help protect miners' safety and health," Stickler said.

Under the FY 2008 budget proposal, 69 percent, or \$215.6 million, would go toward the agency's efforts to enforce federal mine safety laws, and 11 percent, or \$34.3 million, would be focused on training efforts. An additional nine percent, or \$28.2 million, of the agency's funding is focused on its goal to help find technological solutions to improve mine safety and the remaining \$35.4 million will cover the agency's administrative costs.

MSHA's proposed budget of \$313.5 million for FY 2008 is a \$35.8 million increase over the agency's current funding level under a continuing budget resolution from Congress. That increase includes \$22.6 million to fully fund 244 more personnel than the agency's current staffing level. MSHA currently has approximately 2,060 staff under the continuing budget resolution.

During a media briefing today outlining MSHA's FY 2008 proposed budget, Stickler also provided an update on the agency's efforts to implement the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response (MINER) Act. MSHA is on target for hiring 170 additional coal mine enforcement personnel by this September. The agency also has completed rulemaking to provide additional training, lifelines and self-contained self-rescuers for miners to improve their ability to survive a mine disaster should one occur.

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